

Women in Agriculture

Abstract

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Rural Women: Their Role in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Women are key to development of rural areas through their contributions to sustainable agriculture and rural development, including food security. Throughout the world, women do much of the agricultural work and preserve biodiversity through saving seed and tending home gardens. Investing in women farmers is an untapped source of productivity gain that can help lift less developed countries and rural communities out of poverty.

To realize women's full potential and to maximize the effectiveness of sustainable development programs will require addressing constraints to women's productivity, including their unequal access to resources and their invisibility in statistics, policy making, and programs.

Key strategies are: 1) improving women's access to resources: land, water, credit, technology (agricultural research, tools, and information technology), and extension services; 2) adopting technology to women's work; 3) girls' education; and 4) making women visible in policy and programs through leadership development, participatory planning methods, and gender analysis, including collection of gender-disaggregated data.

The speaker will share relevant highlights from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and how it will influence the role of women in sustainable agriculture and rural development, as well as USDA programs for development of women scientists and professionals in agriculture and the environment; making women visible in the food security policy process; and school feeding to support girls' education.